



COVID-19 Recommendations for Detention Centers

March 2020

A new coronavirus is causing a contagious respiratory disease known as COVID-19. Its primary symptoms are fever over 100 degrees F, cough, and trouble breathing. Symptoms may be mild or severe, and the disease can be fatal. The potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 is very high in the United States and worldwide.

Because inmates in a correctional facility are unavoidably crowded into close quarters, making it easier to spread infectious disease among themselves and detention center staff, Lewis and Clark Public Health (LCPH) recommends taking the precautions below to help prevent transmission, both within the facility and in the community when an inmate is released.

This is a rapidly evolving situation that may last for a long time. Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation. Visit the Lewis and Clark Public Health web page at www.lccountymt.gov/covid-19. You can also call LCPH at 457-8900 or email publichealth@lccountymt.gov.

Keep the Virus Out

- Suspend visits to the jail until further notice. If you choose not to suspend visits entirely, turn away visitors (and staff) who have fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- Employees who are sick, must stay home.
- Assess inmates during intake and use appropriate infection-control practices if an inmate has symptoms of a respiratory infection as stated above. If an inmate has symptoms of a respiratory illness,
 - Provide a facemask for them to wear
 - Place them under isolation
 - In a separate pod if possible
 - Maintain use of facemask
 - Meals must be delivered
 - Separate bathroom/shower facilities if possible or use separate time for shower.
 - Separate by 6 feet

Prevent Spread of the Virus

- Monitor employees and inmates for symptoms of respiratory infection. Send sick employees home and isolate inmates as described above.
- Strongly encourage frequent handwashing and/or use of hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content; coughing and sneezing into a tissue or elbow; and refraining from touching eyes, nose, and mouth. Have hand sanitizer available in the cell block and at the facility entrance.
- Maintain appropriate PPE supplies for healthcare workers to assess and test symptomatic inmates.
- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.** This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. Disinfection guidance can be found on the [CDC Website](https://www.cdc.gov).
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them:** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Notify health-care facilities by phone before transferring an inmate with respiratory illness to a facility.